4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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217 It houses several collections especially relevant to island residents, including the Esau Jenkins papers. In 1967 we placed more than sixty hours of recorded material, along with prints of Robert Yellin's masterful photographs at the center. We wanted people from the islands, as well as scholars, to have access to this material.

887 533 869 In 1963 Esau Jenkins told us:

> Now some of us, because we can read a little bit more, forget about the place we came from and some of the songs which help us go on. And when older folks sang those songs, it helped them realize they're trusting in God and reaching for a better day. We certainly wouldn't want the children to get away from it. We should cherish it, we should preserve it and keep it. . . .
>
> Now if we hide those sweet songs and try to get away from what we came from, what will we tell our children about the achievement we have made and the distance we have come?

814 In 1988 we noticed a plaque in the office of Bill Jenkins, Esau's oldest son and the administrator of the Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation:*

> A people who have not the pride to record their history will not long have the virtues to make history worth recording; and no people who are indifferent to their past need hope to make their future great.

000 There really is treasure here—honey in the rock. Our hope is that it will always be a part of the islands and a source of strength to island people as they struggle with the pressures and challenges of the present and the future.

114 *The authors' royalties from the Brown Thrasher edition of *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* are going to the Tree of Life Fund administered by the Comprehensive Health Care Corporation in support of cultural activities in the community.

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fewer and fewer places to collectively express their wisdom and their traditions. With the testimonial meetings no longer taking place at the small praise houses, they gather in the larger churches or in the senior citizen centers. But as they explain, "You can't feel yourself in such a large place," or, "You can't really shout on a cement floor covered with carpet." And who will help the younger people recognize and value the strength and beauty in the older forms of cultural expression?

When we were on the islands in December 1987, we went to a Christmas party for senior citizens from centers on each of the five islands—about two hundred people, all from the older generation, attended. At each of these centers regular gatherings are held, and singing and sharing stories and remembrances are a vital part of the meetings. For all the interest of a wider public in sea island culture, it would seem that this kind of gathering in the community on a regular basis is the most encouraging thing of all.

Even more important, what these elders know must be readily accessible to the children and the younger people on the island. Surely in some homes and in some churches it is. It would be wonderful if it were also part of the school system. Mrs. Hunter is occasionally invited to a school in the Charleston area to share what she knows, but as she explains, many older people know what she knows if only they were encouraged more actively to pass it on. In the Johns Island senior center Mrs. Maggie McGill has organized a group that includes her mother (Mrs. Maggie Russell) and others, all of whom are wise in the old ways. The Senior Lights have recently begun to give programs of sea island spirituals and shouts in the Charleston area. In February 1989 they represented the coastal region in a conference at the Smithsonian Institution focusing on congregational song and worship traditions in black communities.

One very encouraging development in the Charleston area is the work of the Avery Research Center for African-American History and Culture. One of its goals is to maintain an archive of material from the Afro-American people of the lowcountry.

(F XV-B)